

The Classical Bulletin

Published monthly from November through April by St. Louis University College of Arts and Sciences at Florissant, Mo.
Subscription price: \$2.00 a year. Entered as second-class matter at Florissant, Mo. Post-Office under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Vol. 25

DECEMBER 1948

No. 2

Pre-Christian Virgil*

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St. Andrew-on-Hudson

Down the centuries, from St. Augustine's days to our own, Virgil has been given many honorific titles. He has been called *vates gentilium* and *paedagogus ad Christum*. Dante made him his guide through the underworld of souls and attributed to him the conversion of the poet Statius to Christianity. "Through thee," says Statius to Virgil, "I was a poet, through thee a Christian." In our own days Virgil has been called "Father of the West," who, "in the last hours before the fullness of time, fulfilled the measure of what was good in the ancient paganism, as others fulfilled the measure of its evil."¹ And of him Sainte-Beuve has said: "la venue même du Christ n'a rien qui étonne quand on a lu Virgile."

Today, it is true, we recognize that the deep veneration felt for Virgil by Christians was based, in part at least, on something like an accident, the apparently Messianic character of the Fourth *Eclogue*. But none the less we realize that the truth lay much deeper, that, in Cyril Bailey's words, "Virgil, the philosopher and poet, as he looked on life and tried to interpret it, had probed something of the secret which lay at the heart of Christianity;"² that, in Dante's striking phrase, Virgil was "one who goes by night and bears a light behind him, and after him makes the people wise;" and that, though he was not a conscious prophet of Christ like Isaiah, he did help to prepare the way for His coming and foreshadowed something of the spirit of Christianity. And this he did by bringing into the world a new spirit, a more humane and spiritual ideal of life.

"Abelard," says St. Bernard in one of his sermons, "sweats dreadfully in the attempt to make Plato into a Christian." Now I shall not sweat to make a Christian of Virgil. But, just as we can discern in Plato a spirit strangely akin to Christian morality, and see that in both all other questions are subordinated to the challenge, "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?" so too in Virgil we can discern, without fanciful analogies, a soul that was "naturally Christian," a man who was walking farther and farther out of the shadows into the light of Christian truth. To understand this, let us recall briefly the spirit of the age in which Virgil lived and moved, then the new spirit which Christ brought into the world, and finally see how, in his humble way, Virgil prepared men's hearts for the Advent of Christ.

When St. Paul looked back, in his Epistle to the Romans, on the pagan world, he summed up his im-

pressions in very severe terms: "insolent, haughty, . . . without natural affection, without mercy." By Virgil's time, Rome had indeed conquered the world, but well-nigh lost her soul in the process. Between 133 - 31 B.C., there had been no less than twelve civil wars caused by the madness of her leaders, a long series of cruel political murders, and five deliberate massacres, concluding with the bloody proscription in which Cicero was slain. Empire had brought in its train the passion for wealth, the craving for luxury, widespread rapacity in the provinces, and among the city-poor a hankering after low amusements and unhealthy excitement. And no less severe than St. Paul in his indictment of vice are Horace and Livy and Virgil at the conclusion of his First *Georgic*:

quippe ubi fas versum atque nefas; tot bella per orbem,
tam multae seclerum facies, non ullus aratro
dignus honos . . .

. . . saevit toto Mars impius orbe.

Rome had lost, or was fast losing, her old-world sense of values, her pristine *pietas*, her ancient *virtus*. And so the sense of sin committed lies heavy on Virgil's heart and gives a sombre tone to many passages of his poetry.

But, where Livy despaired of a cure, Virgil still had hope, hope in the peace that had come at last, hope in a new ruler, hope in the innate good qualities of the Roman people to recover — if only they would rouse themselves in time and put on a new spirit. And of this new spirit he became the prophet. Like another Ezekiel, he saw in a poet's vision a Rome filled with the dry bones of men, and there was no life in them. But over these dry bones the humane and mystical spirit of Virgil blew new life.

"Virgile a chanté, et Jésus-Christ vient au monde: Virgil sang his songs and Christ came into the world." And where best shall we find the new spirit that Christ brought into the world? Much of its essence we find in the Beatitudes that open the Sermon on the Mount. All men, as Aristotle and others had seen, desire to be happy. But, alas, many seek happiness where it is not to be found, in riches, pleasures, honors, power. Such men are not truly happy. Rather, "blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are the meek," and so with the other Beatitudes. Can we find any similar beatitudes in Virgil, a spirit in him like to this Christian spirit, a gospel of happiness that foreshadows, however dimly, this Gospel? I think we can, if we look hard enough.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit," that is, blessed is the man who earns his bread in the sweat of his brow without impatience, murmuring, or envy, who works hard but trusts in God all the while; and blessed too the rich man who does not set his heart on his riches. What has Virgil to say to this? We are lucky enough to find in the *Georgics* two Virgilian beatitudes on poverty. Recall that, in this work, Virgil, who was born and bred in the country, is writing for farmers at grips with the soil, folk who knew hard toil — *labor improbus* — and bitter disappoint-

*Paper read at the annual meeting of the Connecticut Section of the Classical Association of New England held at Fairfield University, October 16, 1948.

ment. Look now at the Second *Georgic* where he is talking about the cultivation of vine and tree. Towards the end, he suddenly breaks out into a beatitude on the farmer's happy lot:

O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint,
agricolas! quibus ipsa procul discordibus armis
fundit humo facilem victum iustissima tellus . . .

which becomes, in the fine translation of C. Day Lewis, the following:

O, too lucky for words, if only he knew his luck,
Is the countryman who far from the clash of armaments
Lives, and rewarding earth is lavish of all he needs.

Hard work and cruel buffets from fortune are the farmer's lot in life; but true peace is his, if only he realize it, and contentment — *at securo quies et nescia fallere vita*, and reverence for the gods who bless his toil. And, lest we think he does not mean it from the heart, Virgil flings down the gauntlet before his master Lucretius: "Happy the man who (like Lucretius) knows the causes of things; but fortunate too the man who knows the country gods, who bemoans not the poor man's lot (for he knows it is no evil), and envies not the rich:

fortunatus et ille deos qui novit agrestis.

It is Virgil's confession of faith, his gospel of peace of heart through hard toil and religious observance. All the rest, the craze for political power, the lust for riches, are vanity. *Quod petis hic est* — if only you open your eyes to your real riches. You have fresh food from your garden, fishing and hunting aplenty, beauty all round you in meadow, grove, and stream, the unspoiled affection of wife and children, and the simple pieties of the countryside. So work your crooked plough and trust in the gods, you farmers too lucky for words.

Turn now to the *Aeneid* and the story of Aeneas' visit to the city of Evander on the seven hills. Rome is not yet, but all about are woods and thickets where, the rustics think, some god dwells. Aeneas and Evander mount the Palatine and come to a modest house. Then Evander speaks:

haec inquit limina victor
Aeides subiit, haec illum regia cepit.
aude hospes contemnere opes et te quoque dignum
finge deo, rebusque veni non asper egenis.

These are the words which Fénelon could not read without tears, and of which Dryden said: "For my part, I am lost in the admiration of it; I condemn the world when I think of it, and myself when I translate it." "These words," says Rand, "in their sheer simplicity startle the reader with the force of the Decalogue or the Sermon on the Mount."³

If we widen our vision to take in all the *Aeneid*, we see that, according to Virgil, the splendor that was Rome issued from lowly beginnings, from the fusion of rustic Italians — *duri agrestes indomiti agricolae* — and a handful of poor Trojan fugitives. Rome, like her own king Numa, was called from a poor land to great empire: *paupere terra, missus in imperium magnum*. And she must never forget the simple virtues that had made her great. Virgil then has a blessing for poverty.

"Blessed are they that mourn." This Beatitude deals with sorrow and suffering. No religion, no poetry that is silent about these can appeal deeply to the heart of man which is seared and scarred by their presence. So Our

Lord, without explaining away all the mystery of suffering, bids men look it in the face, and realize that it has a meaning, a revelation of its own to give to the soul that accepts it, a revelation that nothing else can give.

Now Virgil's poetry is filled with sorrow. The keynote of the music he draws from life is sounded in the pathetic half-line: *sunt lacrimae rerum* . . . Recall Tennyson's words: "Thou majestic in thy sadness at the doubtful doom of human kind," and Fénelon's saying that the inward inspiration of all Virgil's poetry is *tendresse et tristesse*. At the very outset of the *Aeneid* Virgil expresses his sense of the mystery in the words:

tantaene animis caelestibus irae?

And, at the end of his poem, he seems still perplexed by life's ways: Turnus must die, but ah, the pity of it all! Men struggle in the dark and fall, they know not why: *dis aliter visum*; that an empire may be born, Dido must die and Turnus and a host of common men: *sic volvere Parcas*. Is there no purpose in suffering, except the will or whim of some dark Fate that makes sport of men? Is Virgil a pessimist, or a "pejorist," as A. E. Housman called himself? Has he a blessing to confer on sorrow, or a curse?

To begin with, whence comes suffering according to Virgil? Sometimes from gods like Juno, that is, from outside man; but mostly it comes from man himself, and often from the depths of his love. The ultimate enigma, says Conway, which for Virgil wrapped the world in mystery was this: "the fact that our human affection is the source both of the only joys worth counting joys and of the only sorrows worth counting sorrows."⁴ And, he adds, Virgil accepts, nay he welcomes both. Dido above all might have cried with one of our own poets:

Had we never loved so kindly,
Had we never loved so blindly,
Never met — or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken hearted.

But Virgil does more than accept suffering. He recognizes its deep spiritual value. Suffering, he seems to say, is "more piercing than a two-edged sword, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Nor is this, to quote Bailey, "merely a religion of humanity, but a deep sense, such as Christianity later consecrated, that in suffering man reaches the depths of religious experience."⁵ Wordsworth expresses this truth in the words:

Who never ate his bread in sorrow,
Who never spent the midnight hours
Weeping and waiting for the morrow —
He knows you not, ye heavenly powers.⁶

It was suffering that brought home to Dido her *culpa*: *non servata fides cineri promissa Sychaeo*; suffering revealed to Turnus his mad folly; and suffering redeemed the savage Mezentius and turned him from a brute into a heart-broken human being. And in the end, when Dido and Mezentius and Turnus are no more, Virgil's deep sympathy for the fate of his characters does not blind him to the purpose of it all: if man's love clash with the purposes of a righteous Fate, then tragedy results, but there is ultimate meaning behind it all, though we may not discern it. And that a righteous Fate does rule the world Virgil makes abundantly clear in the Sixth Book of his *Aeneid*.

Without this book, we might well believe that Virgil was "perplexed in the extreme" at man's doubtful doom.

But there he sets the story of Troy and Carthage and Rome in the light of a universal Providence. From the mount of vision in the Underworld he shows that Fate is not capricious, but a divine Power that works, however inscrutably, for final good in the world; it is a mystery of light, not of darkness. Yes, there is a Providence that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will. And if, in the end, the ways of God are unsearchable — *viae eius investigabiles* — and shadowed by mystery, if suffering be the lot of Augustus, bereaved of Marcellus, no less than of every common man, what is man to do? What, except to stand firm in faith and bravely go to confront his destiny: *tu ne cede malis . . . ; cede Deo. Per multas tribulationes oportet nos intrare in regnum* is the lesson that Aeneas and the apostles of Christ and Everyman must learn the hard way. So Virgil, like Francis of Assisi (though with a heart less light than his), has a blessing to confer on Brother Pain and Brother Suffering.

"Blessed are the merciful." The pagan world, says St. Paul, was "without mercy." And against its violence and brute force and wanton cruelty Christ opposes the new arms of gentleness, kindliness, pitifulness. Virgil's world, we saw, was not one in which the fair flower of pity could thrive. Scant pity was meted out to enemies, provincials, or slaves. There were of course exceptions, but these were rare. Then came Virgil with his benediction on pity for all created things. For he feels deep sympathy for bird and beast, for the nightingale robbed of her young and the cattle smitten by plague. But he feels most pity for man. While in Homer the common man is only a cipher — *nos numerus sumus*, and his death an added glory to his slayer, every blow in battle wrings the heart of Virgil with its implications of homes made desolate, unmarked graves in a strange land, and sorrowing parents. How often in the battle scenes we catch the break in his voice as he thinks on these: *tunicam mater molli quam neverat auro; dulcis moriens reminiscitur Argos*. How often too he pauses to sing a dirge for the young untimely slain, for Nisus and Euryalus, Pallas and Lausus.

Is there a single character in his *Aeneid* whom he does not pity? Is it *infelix* Dido? He may have come to curse, but he stays to pity. Is it Mezentius *contemptor divum*? His heart is melted with sympathy for the sorrowing father, and Mezentius dies in a blaze of glory. Is it *audax* Turnus? He would have spared him at the end, if only Turnus had not been so ruthless. Turnus dies, *vitaeque cum gemitu fugit indignata per umbras*, and Virgil ends his poem with a moan of pity.

Virgil came with a new ideal for the world. Hence his constant use of the word *pietas*, into which he fuses new implications like gentleness, kindliness, mercifulness towards friend and foe alike. And thus, says Warde Fowler, "Virgil has enlarged the boundaries of the word's meaning, leading the way for a Christian virtue, or at least a virtue which gained from Christianity new force and meaning."⁷

And when it came to war and its madness, Virgil would have none of it. Instead, he pleads for peace by forgiveness, for conciliation instead of fighting, for mercy instead of punishment. To the spirit of the great Julius he addresses (by the lips of Anchises), not a eulogy but an entreaty:

Tuque prior, tu parce . . .
Proice tela manu, sanguis meus.

Among the characters he beatifies in Elysium he includes those "who by their kindly service have made some few remember them:"

Quique sui memores aliquos fecere merendo.

And he concludes his great passage on Rome's imperial mission with the words:

Parcere subiectis et debellare superbis.

War to Virgil was something so impious and unnatural that it needed a Fury to stir it up. Over against its cruelty he sets in high relief the merciful and humane spirit of Aeneas. Two scenes out of many will bring this out. Aeneas, in self-defense and after a protest, is forced to slay young Lausus:

But when he saw the dying look and face,
The face so wondrous pale, Anchises' son
Groaned deeply, pitying him . . .
Poor boy! What guerdon for thy glorious deeds
Shall good Aeneas give thee?

And Virgil means us to contrast this spirit of pity with the savagery of Turnus who, before he slays young Pallas, cries: "Would that his father were here to see him fall."⁸ Later on, after the battle, when Latin envoys come to sue for a truce, Aeneas receives them with gentle words: "Is it peace ye pray for the fallen in war? Nay, gladly would I grant it even to the living." And across the face of Aeneas, as he utters these merciful words, there shines the blessing of another Beatitude: "Blessed are the peacemakers."

These then are the virtues that both Virgil and the Gospel bless. Christianity, beyond a doubt, gave to them a spiritual depth and significance which Virgil saw only darkly, through a glass. But it is praise enough for Virgil that, where most men were blind, he saw so straight and clear. And, great seer that he was, he saw and foreshadowed other capital Christian truths: that a man must lose his life to save it; that peace of heart comes from doing the will of the Father in Heaven: *nella sua voluntade e nostra pace*; and that "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." And so he makes *pious* Aeneas his hero, not a self-willed man like Achilles or Turnus or Roland.

To come to an end, let me tell you a story from Montalembert's *Monks of the West*.⁹ In olden times there once lived in Britain a monk, by name Cedroc the Wise, who loved Virgil dearly. One day, while walking with his friend Gildas, with his Virgil under his arm, he began to weep at the thought that the poet whom he loved so much might even then be perhaps in hell. Just at the moment when Gildas was reprimanding him for that "perhaps," protesting that without any doubt Virgil must be lost, a sudden gust of wind tossed Cedroc's book into the sea. He was deeply moved by the incident, and returning to his cell, said to himself: "I will not eat a mouthful of bread or drink a drop of water before I know truly what fate God has allotted to those who sang upon earth as the angels sing in heaven." After this he fell asleep, and soon after, dreaming, he heard a soft voice addressing him: "Pray for me, pray for me," it said, "never weary of praying: I shall yet sing eternally the mercy of the Lord."

This story, if not true in fact, is *ben trovato*. We too, as

we read those lines of Virgil that "give utterance, as the voice of Nature herself, to that pain and weariness, yet hope of better things, which is the experience of her children in every time," we too feel that we are communing with one who, though a pagan, was not far from the Kingdom of God.

¹ T. Haecker, *Virgil, Father of the West* (New York, 1934), p. 14.

² C. Bailey, *Religion in Virgil* (Oxford, 1935), p. 318. Cf. also T. R. Glover, *Virgil* (London, 1912), p. 332: "If today we discard the interpretations which the early Christians put upon the fourth *Eclogue*, we can share their deeper feeling for *Maro vates Gentilium*."

³ E. K. Rand, *The Magical Art of Virgil* (Cambridge, Mass., 1931), p. 431.

⁴ R. S. Conway, *Harvard Lectures on the Vergilian Age* (Cambridge, Mass., 1928), pp. 111-112.

⁵ C. Bailey, *op. cit.*, p. 317.

⁶ I owe the quotation in its context and some other suggestions to the fine essay of N. Watts, "Virgil and Wordsworth," in the *Dublin Review* (October, 1946), pp. 134-147. (Wordsworth's lines are a good example of a great poet's felicitous translation of the lines of another great poet. The first stanza of Goethe's *Der Harfenspieler* reads thus in the original:

Wer nie sein Brot mit Tränen ass
Wer nie die kummervollen Nächte
Auf seinem Bette weinend sass
Der kennt euch nicht, ihr himmlischen Mächte!

—Editor's note).

⁷ W. W. Fowler, *The Death of Turnus* (Oxford, 1927), p. 148.

⁸ Pity is the normal, habitual attribute of Aeneas. Only once does he yield to the merciless fury of battle, after Pallas has been slain (10. 512-605). It is Aeneas' affection for Pallas and Evander (*Pallas, Evander in ipsis omnia sunt oculis, mensae quas advena primas tunc adiit, dextraeque datae*) that motivates his revenge. This is one of the rare scenes where Aeneas is, so to speak, un-Christian.

⁹ Vol. II, p. 415.

Gleanings from Aristotle's *Politics*

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Aristotle was a voluminous writer. He seems to have observed, reflected, and read with his pen, as it were, always in his hand. We have it on the authority of Diogenes Laertius that there were 445,270 lines in Aristotle's manuscripts. All that the exuberant imagination of the Greeks ever "accused" Homer of writing, scarcely amounted to a tithe of that number. But time has handled the works of Aristotle roughly and given them a severe sifting. Less than one quarter of them has come down to us. He is said to have composed about 400 different treatises. It would appear that his most valuable works have been preserved; and the existing remains of Aristotle still exceed in bulk those of any other classical author. The more important works of Aristotle have been in too common use and too high esteem in all ages and countries to perish everywhere and forever. They were cherished in too many libraries and monasteries to perish even in the Dark Ages.

The remains of Aristotle may be classed under the heads of physics, metaphysics, mathematics, ethics, logic, rhetoric, poetic, and politics. Of the treatise called the *Politics* a sketch, marked necessarily by severe compression, may not be unwelcome at the present time.

It is no easy matter to condense solid gold. In his *Politics* Aristotle's practical sense shines out with unclouded lustre. He proceeds throughout on the principle that men are depraved and selfish, and so steers clear

of all Utopian projects. In his view, the community or the state is prior in the intention of nature to the individual, as every whole is antecedent in the intention of nature to its parts; and the individual can no more answer the end of his existence without the state, than the hand or the foot can live and move and have its being without the body. Man is born a gregarious, political animal. He seeks political society instinctively, as flocks, herds, and bees work together under the guidance of instinct. Political society he defines as a sort of community or partnership which exists for the benefit of the partners. Its germ is to be found in the family. The family grows into a clan. The clan increases until it becomes a nation.

Aristotle justifies slavery as founded in nature and sustained by analogy. Some are born to command, others to obey; some to think, others to work. As the soul is master of the body, so the intellectual and wise have a moral right to control the imbecile and ignorant. But to enslave is a proof of barbarism. Non-Greeks, in the opinion of this gifted philosopher, belong only in a very loose sense to humanity at all. They are really but half men, destined by nature to be hewers of wood and drawers of water for the benefit of the ruling Greek caste. The Nazi doctrine of the "dominant race" was merely the revamping of an old lie.

Community of women and children, so earnestly recommended by Plato in his *Republic*, to say nothing of its tendency to licentiousness, according to Aristotle, would paralyze exertion and annihilate natural affection. If it checks self-interest, he avers, it does so by the extinction of all interest; if it represses self-love, it does so only by smothering all love. As a drop of honey is dissipated and lost in a pail of water, so the sweet affection of love, he says, perishes by too extensive a diffusion.

With regard to another of Plato's darling dreams, a community of goods, Aristotle objects that it would cut the sinews of industry and blind the eye of vigilance. It destroys the pleasure of saying, "This is mine"—a pleasure as natural as self-love. It precludes the privilege of giving to others. Destroy marriage, and what becomes of chastity? Destroy property, and what becomes of liberality? Symphony is good; but symphony is destroyed when it is changed into absolute sameness of tone. Metre is destroyed when it is changed into sameness of time. The greater the variety of tones, the richer the music, if the chords are preserved. So the greater the individuality of the citizens, the better the commonwealth, if harmony is maintained.

Aristotle has some very interesting and acute observations on the nature and end of government. He says that political institutions are best, if adapted to the character and sentiments of the people, and to the circumstances of the age and country. No one polity will suit all countries. The materials of the statesman are the number and the character of the people, and the extent and quality of the country. But no government can make a people happy, if they are not in a good degree virtuous. No relation of superiority to other nations can make a people happy, if they do not possess the elements of happiness in themselves. Wealth, power, prosperity, are no more happiness than a lyre is music.

Men make governments, not vice versa. The virtues of a good citizen and a good man are not identical, neither are they independent of each other. He will hardly be a good citizen, especially in a republic, who is not also a good man.

Aristotle makes three departments of the government, corresponding in nature, though not exactly in name, to the American legislature, judiciary, and executive. He points out the need of keeping these distinct, remarking that the concentration of them all in the same hands, whether it be of one, or of a few, or of the many, is fatal to liberty and justice. A little reflection on recent phenomena, e.g. on Nazi "justice," will suggest manifold illustrations.

Aristotle of necessity attaches great importance to popular education. This he discusses at length and with great ability. It must be uniform, he insists, universal, public, and adapted to the genius and institutions of the people. The people must be taught not only to understand the political institutions under which they live, but to cherish the corresponding habits and the virtues requisite for the survival of such institutions. The youth of a democracy, for example, should be taught, not, as many would think, to regard their own will as law, but to honour their superiors, obey their parents, and to reverence the laws of the land.

Aristotle would not allow marriage until the age of thirty-seven for males and eighteen for females. Children should be subjected to no tasks till they are five years of age, and should be educated at home till seven. Physical education he would have precede mental; and moral discipline should go before that which is purely intellectual. Will there be a return to the principles of the Stagirate in education? Other little points which might be mentioned in this connection as meeting with the approval of Aristotle, are the cultivation of music, to refine the sentiments, and drawing, to form an eye for natural beauty, etc.

Aristotle's *Politics* is radically defective in one particular. It has nothing to say about religion and about God. This is doubtless a common fault in political treatises; but it is a fatal one. Socrates would as soon have recommended a state without a magistrate, as without God. He would as soon have thought of governing people without law, as without religion. It is not perhaps to be wondered at that, overlooking this controlling principle, Aristotle should despair of the elevation of the masses.

Aristotle could have formed no conception of a republic so vast as the United States. In his view, such a state would have appeared as unwieldy as the "ship of two furlongs" which he speaks of in the *Politics*, or as monstrous as the "animal ten thousand stades long" he imagines in the *Poetics*. The principle of representation, which gives an indefinite expansibility to republican governments, was not then understood. Still, there are hints in Aristotle about the dangers of too extensive a territory, and too rapid an influx of foreign population, full of truth and significance in our day. His analysis of the causes of dissolution and the means of preservation of governments (in Book Five) is crammed with instructive facts drawn from the history of 158 ancient states. The grand principles of the science of govern-

ment as laid down by Aristotle will never become obsolete. The experience of the ages has only served to establish them. To this day we know of no political manual which can claim to supersede Aristotle's *Politics*, on the ground either of a comprehensive induction of facts, or of a profound investigation of principles. It is greatly to be regretted that it has fallen so extensively into disuse among statesmen and scholars. It is still marvellously relevant for some of the problems of our own day.

A New Classical Honors Course at Cincinnati

Perhaps some notice of the Honors A.B. course, based solidly on the classics, which has been inaugurated this fall at Xavier University, Cincinnati, will have come to the attention of our readers. At the present writing there are twenty-two freshmen enrolled in the course. All of these students have had four years of Latin and all come from the top ten per cent of their high school classes. Greek is not required for admission, but it must be begun in freshman year, after which all the students enrolled in the curriculum will take three years of college Greek. There are no electives of any note in the entire course. Admission this first year was by transcript; next year it is planned to have an entrance examination.

Most of the classes in this course will be exclusively for Honors students and will be taught by carefully chosen professors. To a limited extent the Jesuit *Ratio* idea of a class professor will be utilized. Thus the present freshmen are taking their Latin, Greek, and logic under one man. All this makes for a personal type of instruction which approaches the tutorial. It is significant that when the request of a few students for special help in Latin was met by the offer of an extra hour of instruction per week, all of the twenty-two students asked to be permitted to attend. In future years the classes will be kept small by limiting enrollment. In the event that the demand increases, as we believe it will, more sections will be opened.

The curriculum calls for twenty hours each semester. In current terminology it will include majors in philosophy and Latin, minors in Greek and English. The possibility of majoring in Greek, however, is provided for. Ten hours of the philosophy major will be devoted to a study in the original of St. Thomas Aquinas. It should be noted that more work both quantitatively and qualitatively is required than in average college courses. Thus some works of most of the great classical authors, such as Homer, Thucydides, Plato, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Demosthenes, Cicero, Lucretius, Virgil, Horace, Tacitus, will be studied. A reading knowledge of one or two modern languages will also be demanded. Moreover the curriculum includes a unique feature in a modern liberal arts programme in its twelve hours of mathematics, ten of chemistry, and eight of physics; the chief purpose of these being to provide sufficient scientific background for the intelligent understanding of philosophy.

Inquiries about additional details may be addressed to the Chairman of the Honors Course Committee, Rev. W. P. Hetherington, S.J., Xavier University, Evanston Station, Cincinnati 7, Ohio.

Taciturnitas stulto homini pro sapientia est.

—Publius Syrus

The Classical Bulletin

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of Arts and Sciences at Florissant, Mo.

Address: THE CLASSICAL BULLETIN, FLORISSANT, MO.

Subscription \$2.00 a year.

Single copies 35c.

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Vol. 25

DECEMBER 1948

No. 2

A Merry Christmas to all our readers!

AD PUERUM JESUM

Tu Mentis aeternae figura et
Candor, inocciduique Pulehri
Caligo lucens!

(Balde, Lyr. 3.29.31-3)

*

AD MATREM VIRGINEM

Ecce crystallus sine labe pura,
Cui suum toto Deus ore yultum—
Filium — impressit, speculi nitentis
Captus amore!

(Balde, Lyr. 4.32.1-4)

Improving Our Teaching

No one who is not by nature musically gifted will choose music as a profession. Nor will anyone think of becoming a speech expert unless he is possessed of the necessary natural gifts for such a calling. But in a great democracy like ours, where there is a standing demand for a vast number of teachers, one sometimes wonders whether a good many of those who go into teaching are not wanting in the native ability essential to good teaching. If there is much truth in the old saw, *Poeta (or orator) nascitur non fit*, there probably would be even more truth in saying that real teachers must be born teachers.

Teaching is communication of knowledge, and therefore essentially demands both knowledge and power of expression. But teaching is much more than that: it is one of the highest forms of leadership, and in all effective leadership it matters even more what a man *is* than what he knows, or what he does, or how he does it. One thing at least seems clear: unless one has real character and a native gift of expression, and until one has a well-rounded general education plus thorough knowledge of some special field, time spent on teaching methods and techniques will not be well spent nor result in successful teaching.

In the classics, as in other disciplines, there have in recent years been great advances in teaching methods: at any rate, there has been much preoccupation with such methods. Has our teaching as a consequence become

any better? Many will answer that question with an unhesitating affirmative. "There is no comparison," they will say, "between high-school Latin classes of today and those of a generation ago. Students are now no longer bored to death; they like it." — "Like what?" we may be tempted to ask, "Latin? Using their reason?" If not — if what the children like is not Latin, ideas, intellectual conquests, but tabloid text-books, entertaining stories, pretty microfilms, playing house in make-believe Roman togas, *et id genus omne*, then we may be pardoned a doubt about the superiority of much present-day high-school teaching of the classics.

Actually, today, a tremendous amount of energy goes into method courses in our schools of education and graduate schools. If the prospective teacher taking such courses is a real man of character, if he is educated, if he knows some branch of learning deeply and broadly, and if he has some natural capacity for imparting knowledge, then — perhaps — the courses he is taking are not a bad investment. But — perhaps, too — he does not in that case need such courses. Perhaps the precious time and energy spent on them would be better employed in increasing his knowledge of his subject — and, hence, his love and enthusiasm for it — and his general education, which would put that special knowledge into better perspective. At any rate, time spent in this way will be sure to be well spent and will pay dividends in the classroom; and unless these fundamental prerequisites of successful teaching are assured, time spent on methodology will be largely wasted.

An intelligent and educated teacher needs no *course* in every new method devised, or experimented with, or advocated by other teachers or by educationists. Oftener than not a hint, the reading of an article, the study of a report will be quite enough for him. If he has the instinct of a teacher, he will always be on the lookout for improved methods — and he will readily distinguish a mere fad from a real advance. If he is intelligent, he will be able to use his own head and will need no one to labor the obvious for him. If he is broadly educated, then ideas, new ideas — pedagogical or any other kind — will be his constant quest.

The moral of these remarks is: "everything in its proper place," and, above all, "first things first." Administrators are ever being tempted to meet deficiencies in teaching by recommending, or even prescribing, new *ad hoc* courses to their teachers. That way lies disaster: it is the fatal path of regimentation, which cripples initiative, induces abject dependence and subservience, and drives real talent from the profession. Nor does it do any good to the person who happens to be a misfit in the brotherhood; such as he must be eliminated, no matter what the teacher shortage, at the peril of ruining education. Many teachers, however, who are enjoying only moderate success in their work, will much improve their teaching by improving themselves: and this is largely a matter of character, breadth of interests, depth of knowledge (and, hence, of interest) in their chosen field.

F. A. P.

So convinced are we of the disastrous effects on education and general intelligence of the neglect of early training in grammar, that we are printing in this issue a plea for more grammar in the primary schools. This plea is the

cry of a veteran schoolmaster and offers a constructive programme for grammar in the grades. We hope our readers will bring it to the attention of their friends who are grade-school teachers. We teachers in the grades, in high schools, and in colleges must all cooperate. The human spirit is one: and it is our privilege under God to have a share in the creative work of forming it to understanding and true wisdom.

F. A. P.

Vishinski Quotes Latin

The *New York Times* in its "Topics of the Times" column for October 10, 1948 printed a long and interesting disquisition on Latin. The occasion was Mr. Vishinski's unexpectedly quoting the Latin phrase *Pacta sunt servanda* at a recent meeting of the Security Council of the United Nations. The writer of the column recalls that if the United Nations meetings had been held three centuries ago, there would have been no language problem, as all the representatives would have been able to understand each other directly, without an official interpreter, in Latin. Now, however, a Vishinski insists on speaking Russian at international gatherings and will not even descend to French, the modern language of diplomacy. The resultant confusion of tongues, the *Times* avers, has increased in direct proportion to the growth of inordinate nationalism in our day. The writer then speaks a strong word for Latin, as being by no means a dead language (witness the numerous *naked* Latin words in modern English, to say nothing of the countless Latin derivatives in our every-day speech), but the logical instrument of international communication in a Europe in which civilization was once carried into every corner — except Russia — in the Latin language. Unfortunately, Russia has held aloof from that civilization for 2000 years. And the irony of it all is to have a Russian quote Latin in the Security Council of United Nations and practically nobody present understand him!

F. A. P.

The New Greek Patristic Lexicon

Readers of CB will be interested to learn the present status and future prospects of the great Oxford Lexicon of Patristic Greek which is now at last nearing completion.

The first general notice of this work that reached wide circulation was probably the reference to it in the preface to the Stuart Jones and McKenzie revision of Liddell and Scott. It was there stated that no attempt was made in the revised lexicon to include Patristic words and meanings, since a comprehensive lexicon of that particular period was under active preparation at Oxford, and was expected to appear shortly after the new *L & S* itself. That was long years ago, and many people besides myself must have wondered what had become of the project.

While in Oxford this past summer, I made it a special point to gain information on the matter. Through Father Gervase Matthew, O.P., one of the major collaborators in editorial aspects of the work, I was introduced to the Director, Rev. Dr. Cross. He very kindly explained the undertaking and took me through the special room in the New Bodleian where the work is now centered. There are the files containing all the cards with words, and the

drafts of articles on individual vocables. The reading of texts for word listing has long been completed, and some of the articles have been written up in semi-final form. The rest are being compiled at present, on the basis of the cards. Work is being pressed forward, and several scholars are now engaged on it, some of them full time.

It was stated that if the lexicon were to be published in fascicles, as was the revised Liddell and Scott, the first few sections could be released shortly. But it has wisely been decided to publish the work as a completed whole, and this naturally delays appearance of any part until all are ready. It will probably require four or five more years, as things now look, before the lexicon is in our hands. This delay is unwelcome, but there is no remedy. An undertaking of this nature involves a vast amount of labor and has many complexities. Scholarship must not be sacrificed for haste, and until recently the staff engaged on this project has been small, with restriction of activity during the war. The committee in charge is now trying to speed progress as much as is consistent with high level results. There is good reason to trust that the final product will prove to have been worth waiting for.

The scope of the lexicon, as I understand it, is limited. It will attempt to cover only the strictly Patristic period: the first seven centuries, from the *Didache* to St. John Damascene. And within this area it will largely confine itself to those words which have special theological significance or are used with distinctive Christian connotations. Ordinary Greek words showing no difference from their normal use in pagan authors will generally be omitted; they can be found in Liddell & Scott.

This limitation allows reduction in bulk, and therefore in cost (though both size and price will probably be considerable), and at the same time gives ampler scope for full discussion of the various uses of important words, with indication of their historical development. Some of the finished articles which were shown me — such as those on *baptisma* and *gennetos* — run to twenty or more pages in MS, and are thorough pieces of careful analysis, with much quotation of actual usage in senses listed.

The new lexicon, then, is different in many ways from the only approach to such an effort before in English, E. A. Sophocles' *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*. This covers the years 146-1100, is not strong on Patristic meanings, and has not the thoroughness of treatment attempted by the new Oxford project. Sophocles will remain important for the Byzantine writers, until some more adequate work in that field appears.

The merit of the new lexicon will no doubt vary. Inevitably, some articles will be weaker than others, from omissions by readers of texts in compiling the preliminary cards, or from failure of the editors to advert to certain divergencies, divisions, or relationships of meanings, or from unawareness of special connotations of a technical or historical nature. But this is the lot of lexicographers, and the basis for future progress. From the quality of the editors, and the scholarly care of their techniques, it may be confidently stated that the new dictionary will certainly be a great step forward and a valuable instrument for a better understanding of the Fathers' thought, so powerfully influential in the past and so vital today.

We owe a heavy debt of gratitude to the many scholars who have given much of their time and talent to this

laborious work. The appearance of their conclusions will be eagerly awaited, and long remembered.

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Grammar in Elementary Schools

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The teaching of grammar in grades four, five, and six is no longer a matter to be postponed. High school teachers everywhere are decrying the utter incompetence of pupils in the field of English. There is more than one factor to account for the general disability of pupils. But no factor is more evident than the lack of training in the grammar of language.

Principals, supervisors, and other interested observers can enter scarcely a single average high school class and find pupils grounded in even the barest essentials of grammar. Teachers of Latin, French, and other languages are forced to spend valuable time on elementary grammar; knowledge which pupils should long since have mastered. One can only imagine the pleasure with which such teachers would undertake their own proper work. But instead they are bound by the necessity of teaching the most elementary terms of language. Their own business is postponed and pupils look upon Latin and modern foreign language as a Sahara of grammatical exercise.

Formerly there were institutions called *grammar schools*. In them, the teaching of grammar was an essential business. It was more than an exercise in language. It was the foundation of composition, literature, and all the other phases of English.

The series of experiments which evolved the junior high school, (dubious advance on the educational front) coupled with the philosophy of progressive education, produced that softening of all curricula. And in no field is the result more apparent, and in no field is the result more disastrous.

A generation of boys and girls has grown up without adequate knowledge of their mother tongue and without any facility in either reading or expression. As proof one can only refer to the miscellany of picture magazines which flood the newsstands. Once, books and other reading material were *illuminated* by illustrations (as the word itself connotes). Now, the pictures are illuminated by a line or two of simplest language.

No one will claim that the teaching of grammar will produce a nation of English enthusiasts. The radio, the "movies," the general vulgarity and mediocrity of popular publications — these have become integral parts of American culture (if "culture" is the proper term).

But the teaching of grammar, like the frame-work of a building, will certainly provide the skeleton upon which to attach the flesh of the living word. Grammar, like mathematics, is exact. It is either right or wrong. It permits no personal interpretation, no arbitrary variation. Nor is its least value the mental training which its study necessarily imposes.

Everywhere is the cry for discipline. Parents, teachers, the police, the clergy, social workers — all decry the prevalent contempt for authority in every form. Is it not a matter of regret that the traditional subjects which

provided mental (and moral) discipline have gone by the board? History has been softened to pleasant biography — the hard discipline of dates, facts, exact knowledge has been omitted. Literature is watered down to the common denominator of acceptable mediocrity. Ambitious editors who presume to "rearrange" Scott and Hawthorne, Stevenson, Dickens and the rest, forget that good literature demands a real cooperation between author and reader. Can anything be more presumptuous than *editing* a literary master? Is it too much to raise the standards of pupils, or must the standards of all be the same — provided they are low? One can only compare such emasculation of the treasures of literature to the outrageous attempts to edit the master-pieces of Mozart or Beethoven to fit the halting figures of struggling immaturity.

Let teachers, therefore, recall those studies which offer the soundest mental discipline. And what subject is more suitable than the teaching of grammar?

Grammar, then, is the business of the elementary school. It should begin in the fourth grade. Its concepts are within the mental compass of young pupils. All it needs is the proper break-down into teachable units, small, easily understood and easily digested. Hand in hand with other drill upon what is taught should go the diagramming of words, phrases, and sentences.

Then, when pupils enter the junior high school they will have acquired the foundation of language. Then teachers of English and teachers of other languages may enter upon their proper business. Then the spectacle of tenth-grade pupils stumbling over parts of speech will no longer disgrace the average school.

What grammatical concepts should be taught in the elementary school?

In the fourth grade: parts of speech; subject and predicate, simple and complete; sentences: declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory.

In the fifth grade: adjective and adverbial phrase; inverted order of subject and predicate; singular and plural of nouns; singular and plural possessives; case: nominative, possessive, objective.

In the sixth grade: nouns: common, proper, collective, and abstract; adjectives: descriptive and limiting; verbs: active and passive, transitive and intransitive; direct and indirect object; principal clause, subordinate clause, subordinate conjunction; sentences: simple, compound, and complex.

These things can be thoroughly learned in the elementary school. The foundations of grammar having been laid in the early years of school, teachers of junior and senior high school may then engage with confidence in more mature work in English. Composition, vocabulary, literature, and the like, have many complexities. Even with the fundamentals of grammar secure, teachers are hard pressed to meet these other phases. Therefore, by laying the foundations of grammar the elementary school will have anticipated much of the work now forced upon the high schools.

Thucydides and Xenophon, the orators of Athens, and the philosophers, speak a wisdom more applicable to us politically than the wisdom of even our own countrymen who lived in the Middle Ages; and their position, both intellectual and political, more nearly resembles our own.—*Thomas Arnold*.

Functional Parallelism in Ancient Rhetoric

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It is often remarked that rhetoric has virtually disappeared from the American scene. Instead of the balanced, periodic sentence, one finds, even in political oratory, the language and manner of ordinary conversation. Anything which suggests striving for effect is shunned. To modern ears the speeches of Cicero seem intolerably florid when translated. What one age values another rejects, of course; the eighteenth century's emulation of classical models is not to be looked for in the twentieth, which puts a premium on speed and efficiency, and discounts the importance of words in comparison to action. Yet it seems to me that at least a subsidiary explanation for the decline of rhetoric can also be deduced from the paucity of our resources, compared to those of the ancients. In English, monotony attaches itself quickly to a series of parallel terms, especially when they are aligned in pairs or triads. The classical tongues, as everyone is aware who has studied them at even an elementary level, have enormously greater flexibility of word order; to take a single example, chiasmic arrangement provides relief from a stereotyped sequence of modifiers. Another device, less familiar to the beginner, is the employment of non-verbally parallel syntax. My attention became drawn to this technique while I was reading Livy the past summer, and I have since noted down examples from other authors as I encountered them, with no attempt to make an exhaustive survey, but with the aim of finding representative patterns of expression.

Few of the citations involve radical departure from what we have all learned and taught. It is, of course, elementary that an infinitive is a verbal noun, that there are many types of substantive and adjectival clauses, that the genitive or ablative case of a noun may be equivalent in function to an adjective, that a participle is often best translated by a subordinate clause. Nevertheless it is, in my opinion, a revelation to see with what matter-of-fact frequency Latin authors put side by side these functionally equivalent members that are so divergently composed. The tendency to do so apparently increases as time goes on; there are more instances in Horace than in Terence, more in Livy than in Horace, and far more in Tacitus than in Livy. Ovid and Lucan would almost certainly show abundant use of the device. It would extend the limits of this article unduly to go into elaborate detail. Discussion of a few types will suffice, for each reader can build a list of his own from familiar texts.

Substitutions for parallel verb forms appear to be least varied, although the pairing of a historical infinitive with an indicative occurs with great frequency and the double dative with a form of *sum* often supplants a single verb. From Terence's *Andria*, 145-6, comes this more unusual periphrasis:

... verum si augeam
aut etiam adiutor siem eius iracundiae

("But if I should magnify or even abet his anger"), and in Livy I, 54, 10 the omission of *erant* produces the semblance of nouns matched with a historical infinitive:

Largitiones inde praedaeque et dulcedine privati commodi sensus malorum publicorum adimi.

("There followed a succession of donations and distribu-

tions of booty, and perception of the public ills was taken away by the enjoyment of personal benefit.") Much bolder is the virtual equation of a participle (by the addition of the correlative *ut . . . ita*) to an indicative in Tacitus (*Annales* IV, 33):

Ceterum ut profutura, ita minimum oblectationis adferunt.

("But though they are likely to prove beneficial, yet they afford little satisfaction.")

Equivalents for nouns are naturally most frequent. The *infinitive phrase* is the simplest substitute, serving as either subject or object. The Odes of Horace, otherwise rarely venturesome, show this kind of parallelism rather often, e.g.,

Est qui nec veteris pocula Massici
nec partem solido demere de die
spernit . . . I, 1, 19-21.

("There are those who reject not cups of old Massic wine nor subtraction of a portion from their crowded day.")

An *indirect statement* may also be paired with a noun, as in Tacitus's account of honors paid to the memory of Germanicus:

... arcus additi . . . cum inscriptione rerum gestarum ac mortem ob rem publicam obisse — *Annales* II, 83.

("Triumphal arches were added bearing a record of his exploits and of the fact that he had met his death in the service of the state.")

A combination of *noun and participle* in which the verbal idea is best translated by an abstract noun (the *ab urbe condita* type) may be coupled with a noun, as when Tacitus tells of the shattering of hopes that Germanicus's line might regain its ascendancy:

Quod principium favoris et mater Agrippina spem male tegens perniciem adcelerare — *Ibid.* IV, 12.

("This beginning of favor and the elder Agrippina's failure to conceal her hope hastened its downfall.")

A very interesting conjunction of a subject infinitive phrase, a noun-participle group, and a single noun (the latter two serving as joint subject of the second verb) occurs practically at the start of Horace's odes:

Sunt quos curriculo pulverem Olympicum
collegisse iuvat metaeque fervidis
evitata rotis palmaeque nobilis
terrarum dominos evehit ad deos — I, 1, 3-6.

("There are those whom it fills with joy to have raised Olympic dust with their car, and whom the grazing of the turning-post with their blazing wheels and award of the ennobling palm exalt to the gods sovereign over earth.")

The *clause* shows greater variety than the phrase; most recurrent, perhaps, is the *generalizing* sort introduced by *quod* (or *quantum*), e.g.,

Eas Caecina aquiliferis signiferisque et quod maxime castrorum sincerum erat occulto recitat — *Tac.*, *Ann.* I, 48.

("Caecina read it in secrecy to the eagle-bearers and the standard-bearers and the most loyal element in the camp.")

But one discovers also the *purpose* clause:

Sed decreta pecunia ex aerario, utque per circum triumphali veste uterentur — *Ibid.* I, 15.

("But funds from the public treasury were voted, and authorization to wear triumphal garb in the Circus.")

So, too, the clause *dependent on a verb of fearing*:

Formidare malos fures, incendia, servos,
ne te compilent fugientes, hoc iuvat?—Horace, *Serm. I*, 77-8.

("Is this your pleasure, to dread wicked thieves, fires,
plundering by runaway slaves?")

Again, the *indirect question* may appear:

... labante deinde paulatim disciplina velut desidentis
primo mores sequatur animo, deinde ut magis magisque
lapsi sint, tum ire coeperint praecipites—Livy, *I. Pref.* 9.

("Let him then follow in his mind the sinking, so to speak,
of moral standards as discipline gradually grew slack,
then their progressive fall, then the beginning of their
headlong plunge.")

The differently stated *expressions which convey the sense of an adjective* are, generally speaking, too familiar to require illustration. Among these commonplaces one may list the genitive and ablative of description, the possessive genitive paralleling *alienus*, and a participle with a group of modifiers. It will perhaps not be amiss, however, to mention the matching of an adjective with a *prepositional phrase*, as in:

... in novo populo, ubi omnis repentina et ex virtute
nobilitas sit, futurum locum forti ac strenuo viro—Livy, *I*,
34, 6.

("... that among a new people, where all aristocracy was
of recent origin and dependent on merit, there would be
a place for a brave and energetic man.")

A *clause*, usually *relative*, often furnishes the parallel member; my first example has, it seems to me, suggestions of *potential force*, while the second is the ordinary clause of *characteristic*:

... medioeribus et quis
ignoscas vitiis teneor—Horace, *Serm. I*, 4, 130-1.

("I am prey to ordinary and forgivable faults.")

... nulla unquam res publica nec maior nec sanctor nec
bonis exemplis ditior fuit, nec in quam civitatem tam serae
avaritia luxuriaeque immigraverint, nec ubi tantus ac tam
diu paupertati ac parsimoniae honos fuerit—Livy *I*, *Pref.*
11.

("Never has there been a greater, holier state, richer in
good examples, more belatedly invaded by greed and
prodigality, or so long and fully regardful of poverty and
thrift.")

This latter illustration, with its co-ordinate *tantus ac tamdiu*, may fittingly serve also as a transition to *adverbial expressions*, into which more divergent elements enter. An adverb may actually be involved, in combination with an *adjective*, as in Horace's *raro et perpauca loquentis* (*Serm. I*, 4, 18), or an *ablative of cause* may be paired with other terms, e.g.

1. with a *prepositional phrase*

... incertum metu an per invidiam—Tac., *Ann. I*, 11.

("... whether from fear or jealousy it is unclear.")

2. with a *participle*

Siluit Hortalus, pavore an avitae nobilitatis etiam inter
angustias fortunae retinens—Ibid. *II*, 38.

("Hortalus made no reply, whether because he was
afraid or because even in his straitened circumstances he
retained a measure of his ancestral dignity.")

3. with a *causal clause*

... quod non iactantia refero sed quia collegio quindecim-
virum antiquitus ea cura et magistratus potissimum ex-
sequebantur officia caerimoniarum—Ibid. *XI*, 11.

("This I mention not out of boastfulness, but because
that function belonged from early times to the priest-
hood of the quindecimvirs and because it was primarily
state officials who discharged the duties connected with
the ceremonies.")

4. with a *purpose clause*

... nullo metu an ut firmitudinem animi ostentaret—
Ibid. *IV*, 8.

("... either because he was fearless or to parade his
resoluteness").

A variation of this pattern for stating the causes of an action is illustrated by Livy's wording:

Facile persuadet ut cupido honorum et cui Tarquinii
materna tantum patria esset—I, 34, 7.

("She easily persuaded him, since he was eager for honors
and Tarquinii was only his mother's birthplace.")

An *ablative of manner* may be conjoined with *adjectives* to convey an adverbial idea:

Quae cuncta non quidem comi via sed horridus ac
plerumque formidatus retinebat—Tac., *Ann. IV*, 7.

("All these qualities he continued to exhibit, though not,
to be sure, in any affable fashion, but in such a way as to
make most men shrink from and dread him.")

Finally, the *nominative* of a noun or adjective, modifying the subject of the principal verb, may be associated with an *ablative absolute*, each element expressing causal (or concessive) sense, as in Livy's description of Tarquin:

... sibi occasionem datam ratus est, et ipse juvenis
ardentis animi et domi uxore Tullia inquietum animum
stimulante—I, 46, 2.

("Since he was himself a young man of high spirit and at
home his wife Tullia was goading his restive temper, he
thought that an opportunity had been provided him.")

or in Tacitus's allusion to the policy at first followed by Tiberius:

Nam Tiberius cuncta per consules incipiebat tamquam
vetere re publica et ambiguus imperandi—*Ann. I*, 7.

("For Tiberius continued to initiate all action through
the consuls, as if the old republic still existed and he were
unsure of his sovereignty.")

Analysis of this kind might profitably be directed to other authors and texts, from which it should be possible to derive a still greater range of syntactical patterns. The results could be applied in classroom teaching, by showing that complex expressions like participial phrases and subjunctive clauses were treated as the equivalents of single parts of speech (nouns, adjectives, and adverbs), and that the equivalence should be maintained as fully as possible in translating; this ought to help in getting rid of unimaginative, over-literal, and stereotyped renderings. A more valuable effect, however, would be heightened awareness of syntactical variety, carried over into all subsequent reading and insuring new respect for the Latin language as a medium of expression and for the artistic skill of the writers who molded it into so flexible an instrument.

The *Treatise on Rhetoric* (of Aristotle) is a magazine of intellectual riches. The whole is a textbook of human feeling; a storehouse of taste; an exemplar of condensed and accurate, but uniformly clear and candid reasoning.
— Edward Copleston

The Gentiles and the *Phaedo*

By WILLIAM J. BURKE, S. J.
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Countless are the litterateurs and critics who have written in defence of our ancient heritage, the classical literature of the Greeks. They have argued long; they have argued well. St. Augustine, however, has argued best. He has given an apology, beautiful and accurate, for the Greek classics, when in his *Confessions* he states: "Therefore You brought in my way some books of the Platonists translated from Greek into Latin. In them I found, though not in the very words, yet the thing itself proved by all sorts of reasons."¹ He then narrates how he read the exordium of the Gospel of St. John in these Platonic books. "But I did not find: 'And the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us.'" And again: "You have called the Gentiles into Your inheritance. From the Gentiles indeed I had come to You. And You had said to the Athenians by Your Apostle that in You we live and move and are; as certain of their own writers had said; and obviously it was from Athens that these books came."

Paul, Apostle of the Gentiles, says to the Corinthians: "Do you not know that those who run in a race, all indeed run, but one receives the prize? So run as to obtain it."² This text is the point. God had said to the Jews: "Thou art my people Israel and I am thy God." Redemption was of the Jews. And Juda grew strong before the face of God vanquishing her enemies by the might of heaven. All the world was barren, but in Juda the root of Jesse would soon flower.

But what of the Gentiles — what of the men building the Parthenon, battling Philip of Macedon, searching the secrets of nature? Were they to be pariahs from the Kingdom of Heaven? Was death to mean bondage and subservience? Was there a centre to their lives, or were they centrifugal little atoms to be scattered into space? "Men are very incredulous with regard to the soul, fearful that after release from the body it no longer exists anywhere, but that on the day of a man's death it is corrupted and perishes; that immediately after its release from the body it leaves and flies off, scattered like wind or smoke, and no longer exists anywhere at all."³ Socrates pondered such questions as these and without Revelation gave very significant answers.

The Pauline "race-course" was more than a figure. The world of old was a hippodrome, a cosmic hippodrome. The athletes were stripping for the contest, oiling their bodies; the charioteers were adjusting their harness and lines. The goal was God. Can we doubt it when we know that the soul has an exigency for the divine, and that all things have their foundation in the divine essence? But Israel had an advantage. Isaiah had foretold, and the other prophets as well, that God was their goal. They knew the route through mountains and passes, cliffs and ravines. The Greeks had but a misty knowledge of the goal — only starlight, but this they knew, that run the race they must. It was a cross-country race, such as only hardy men would undertake. In God's wisdom, these Gentiles who had come so far by natural reason would receive an Apostle to enlighten them. And God sent Paul to Corinth.

I do not intend to attribute supernatural enlightenment to Socrates, to Plato, to Aristotle, to Sophocles,

for it is in the rejection of the view that the Greeks were supernaturally enlightened that the great Greek glory rests. Very often we consider only how far short of the truth the Socratic shafts fell, when in reality the natural miracle of the situation is that they penetrated so far. When Socrates says, "But whether I was duly zealous and accomplished anything, I think on arrival there I shall know for certain — if God wills, soon,"⁴ *theos*, the singular, is not used by accident. Generally the Greeks considered their *theoi* as many. Here and elsewhere Socrates speaks of the one *theos*. Although in a previous passage he had said: "On arrival there he will dwell in the company of the gods,"⁵ the use of the plural is surely not to be deemed a contradiction. I prefer to think that this is a hesitant Socrates speaking. He simply is not sure; but, of course, he who loved so many things, realized that one can love personally only a singular being. When he speaks of the after-life, he does so tenderly, conveying the impression of hope of love from his Master. In his discourse he is defending the immortality of the soul before men who thought the body all-beautiful; and death meant the corruption of this body.

Even more striking is his conception of reward and punishment in the after-life: "I am hopeful that there is something in store for the dead, and . . . much better for the good than for the wicked."⁶ He dared conceive not only a future life, but a system of retribution and reward. "For it will not be right that what is unclean should lay hold on what is clean."⁷ He proceeds in the *Phaedo*, that dialogue made more tender by circumstances of his approaching death, to show us the true way to purchase virtue. "My dear Simmias, . . . the only right coin, for which all else must be exchanged, is wisdom."⁸ The resemblance between this passage and Matthew's "pearl of great price"⁹ is noteworthy.

Visualize for an instant the ruins of the Parthenon. See how brilliant sunlight cascades down over this broken beauty. Inside, see how the sunlight has made entrance through an opening in the roof, how it inundates certain places on the floor, how the colonnades cast long dark shadows, and the rest of the interior is silent and black. So I conceive of these reflections of Socrates, these shafts of truth and staggeringly close approximations to the truth. In the evening the sunlight retreats. Even the heat of the sun soon leaves the stone and night sentinels the Acropolis. These reflections of Socrates and Plato were flashes of sunlight that passed away. They continually philosophized, probed, passing from one theory to another. We must realize that they had no infallible court of appeal. They knew not when they were right. Socrates' only *Imprimatur* was his death-warrant from the Eleven.

In brief, the Jews had Revelation; the Greeks did not. The Israelites were led by divine prophecy; the Greeks advanced by human reason alone. If this is so, it must be seen that classical letters take on new beauty, the thoughts are vested in new brilliance. That the Gentiles did their work well is attested by Paul's words that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, Greek nor Scythian, but all are one in Christ Jesus; and Augustine's: "You have called the Gentiles into Your inheritance. From the Gentiles I came to You."¹⁰

¹Confess. 7.9. ²1 Cor. 9.24. ³Phaedo 70A. ⁴Ibid. 69D. ⁵Ibid. 69C. ⁶Ibid. 63C. ⁷Ibid. 67B. ⁸Ibid. 69A. ⁹Matt. 13.45-6. ¹⁰Confess. 7.9.

Book Reviews

The Nature of the Liberal Arts, by John E. Wise, S. J. Bruce, Milwaukee, 1947. Pp. 225. \$3.50.

This is a satisfying and impressive inquiry into the nature of the liberal arts by a writer who is not only obviously endowed with native qualifications requisite for the task but who has been educated with unusual completeness according to the very tradition which he studies. In his Introduction, the author states so succinctly and clearly the plan of his work, that his own words can often best be used in this review. He seeks an answer to such questions as these: what does the term "liberal arts" mean, what are the essential characteristics of the liberal arts common to all ages, and what is the idea behind them?

Because an answer to these questions is not clear from the modern scene, whereas in the history of the past disagreement on the fundamentals of a liberal training is not so manifest, the author goes to history; his purpose is not to write a complete history of the arts but to study representative examples in the several periods; thus one may form reasoned conclusions as to the nature or essential characteristics. He recognizes two conditions of selection: the examples must be truly representative of the liberal arts, that is, accepted as such by contemporaries, and each instance must be studied in the background of the particular period.

As preparatory steps in his investigation, the author establishes that the nature of the liberal arts must mean not only content but aims and methods; further, he seeks a working definition which is to serve both as a hypothesis and as a means of development, and so from available histories of the arts he formulates such a definition in these terms: "the liberal arts are those studies which are formative of man's highest powers, constitute an intermediate stage in the educational process, and hand down with organic growth the fundamental truths by which we live;" and finally he brings into sharp focus these questions involved in that definition: What are man's highest powers, what is the intermediate stage in the educational process, and what are the fundamental truths? The answers are to come from the writers chosen for study; they have much to say on these subjects and their reasons are to be accepted on their merits.

In the historical treatment of his matter, the author is especially resourceful in selecting significant passages from Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian, as writers exemplifying the thought of classical antiquity, and from St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, the *Ratio Studiorum*, and Cardinal Newman, as representatives influenced by both the ancient and the Christian tradition. Each of these is subjected to penetrating analysis, in order that the contribution of each may be clearly discerned. It is this part of the study that is most original as well as most rewarding; portions of it or all of it will be read again and again, and for a variety of reasons: many readers may well be making their first acquaintance with some of the writers studied; it is in this part especially that the writing has the high quality of excellence, and the author here brilliantly reveals not only the wide scope of his reading but, more important, the ability to fuse into a comprehensible whole the materials with which he works. One notes here too that the treat-

ment is strikingly brief, as if the author would thus reinforce his claim to objectivity and to the employment of the inductive process.

After the historical treatment, a chapter is given to each of the three essentials under the titles of Formal Training, Propaedeutic, and Content of the Liberal Arts. These chapters are analytic and compare the historical scene to modern theory and practice; current interpretations are recognized as in agreement with history or at variance with it. The final chapter, Forecast and Retrospect, restates the essentials of the study and summarizes historical and current interpretations.

Florissant, Mo.

WM. DOMINIC RYAN, S. J.

The Lyric Metres of Greek Drama, by A. M. Dale. Cambridge, at the University Press; New York, the Macmillan Co. 1948. Pp. 220. \$4.00.

Greek metricians are not a very numerous clan these days. Indeed, the lack of even a respectable elementary knowledge of metrics has often enough impoverished the Greek studies of the present-day collegian. In part this ignorance has been due to the paucity of English books on the subject. But now that Thomson's excellent introduction to the lyric metres of tragedy (Geo. Thomson, *Greek Lyric Metre*, Cambridge, 1929) has been followed up and supplemented by the scholarly volume under review, English speaking students of Attic drama are adequately equipped to tackle the choral lyric of the great masters without recourse to learned and difficult works in German.

Even though the author does not attempt "a complete and systematic study either of the whole body of lyric in drama or of each metrical category," the range of her discussion is nevertheless impressive. Her modest objective of trying to indicate "the prevailing movement of each type of rhythm and any characteristic uses by particular poets" is most satisfyingly achieved.

The book is not meant to be a first introduction to the subject; it is necessarily much too technical for that. But even beginners will find the first chapter helpful; for in it are discussed such important matters as the relationship of lyric metre to music and the dance, the distinction between stichic and lyric metres, and the structure of lyric rhythms (*cola*, phrases, periods, stanzas).

Chapters three to eleven take up in turn (and in detail) the various lyric rhythms of tragedy and comedy, dactylic, anapaestic, iambic, trochaic, cretic-paeonic, dochmiac, ionic, aeolic, and dactylo-epitritic. In each case the fundamental and expanded rhythmical units or phrases are identified and studied, and then the characteristic uses and modifications of them by the poets are discussed.

Chapter twelve, which treats of strophic construction, and chapter thirteen, which concludes the study with some interesting notes on performance, will also prove stimulating and informative even for relative beginners.

To appraise adequately and in detail this notable contribution to the subject of Greek metrics would take a Wilamowitz. Very many technical points and problems are involved about which specialists are bound to differ. But the general student of the classics will receive the book with unqualified gratitude and appreciation: it is scholarly, sane, eminently useful, and fills a real want.

F. A. P.

